

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00
NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-13 DHA-02
FBO-02 SCS-03 MCT-01 AID-05 CCO-00 OC-06 OPR-02
USSS-00 SCA-01 A-01 OMB-01 SY-05 /092 W
-----171845Z 116418 /47

O 171500Z APR 77

FM AMCONSUL LAHORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 1228

INFO/RUSBQD/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD NIACT IMMEDIATE 7201

AMCONSUL KARACHI NIACT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI NIACT IMMEDIATE 1519

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAHORE 0385

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS. PINT, PK

SUBJECT: CRISIS IN PUNJAB: SECURITY SITUATION

REF: (A) LAHORE 03771 (C) LAHORE 383

1. SUMMARY: VIOLENT AGITATIONS AGAINST GOVERNMENT CONTINUED
IN PUNJAB ON APRIL 16. DEMONSTRATORS BURNED PPP OFFICES
IN LAHORE AND SHARP CLASHES TOOK PLACE BETWEEN POLICE AND
OPPOSITION PROTESTERS IN OTHER PLACES. TWO-DAY NATIONAL
LAWYERS' CONVENTION CLOSED IN LAHORE WITH BIG PROCESSION
ON THE MALL. OPEN CONFRONTATION BETWEEN PPP AND PNA WORKERS
HAVE ABATED AS PPP FINDS ITSELF UNABLE TO WITHSTAND OPPOSITION
MOVEMENT IN STREETS WHILE SUPPORT FOR PARTY IS FADING. END SUMMARY.

2. PNA DEMONSTRATORS BURNED TWO PPP OFFICES IN LAHORE
APRIL 16 AS VIOLENT MOVEMENT AGAINST GOVERNMENT CONTINUES.
EARLIER, SOME 50,000 OPPOSITION MARCHERS HAD GATHERED ON THE
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MALL IN MAIN DOWNTOWN BUSINESS AREA TO LISTEN TO SPEECHES
BY ACTING PNA SECRETARY GENERAL MALIK WAZIR ALI, AND TWO
OTHER OPPOSITION LEADERS, KHAN MOHAMMED ASHRAF KHAN AND
QARUI ABDUL HAMID AQDRI. WAZIR ALI REPORTEDLY EXHORTED
HIS FOLLOWERS TO "BESIEGE" HOUSES OF PPP MEMBERS, OSTRACIZE
THEM AND FIGHT UNTIL VICTORY WAS ACHIEVED. ASJRAF KHAN
WARNS PPP ASSEMBLY MEMBERS TO RESIGN IMMEDIATELY TO SAVE

THEMSELVES FROM PEOPLES' WRATH. VIOLENT SPLINTER GROUP BROKE OFF SHORTLY AFTER LISTENING TO SPEECHES AND HEADED FOR HOUSE OF PPP ASSEMBLY MEMBER TARIQ WAHID BUT WHO IS WIDELY BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR EARLIER ATTACKS ON PNA WORKERS. POLICE WERE ABLE TO HALT MOB, BUT NOT BEFORE THEY BURNED DOWN TWO PPP OFFICES MENTIONED ABOVE. BUT HAS REPORTEDLY GONE UNDERGROUND TO ESCAPE HIS PURSUERS. SAME DAY 3,000 LAWYERS TOOK OUT A PEACEFUL PROCESSION ON THE MALL, MARCHING FROM HIGH COURT TO PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY BUILDING AND BACK AGAIN. INFORMED OBSERVERS CLAIM THIS WAS ONE OF THE LARGEST SUCH PROCESSIONS EVER HELD IN THE CITY. DEMONSTRATION FOLLOWED TWO-DAY CONVENTION ATTENDED BY LAWYERS FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY IN PROTEST AGAINST RECENT GOVERNMENT ACTIONS, PARTICULARLY ARREST AND SHOOTING OF LAWYERS.

3. PROTESTS CONTINUE THROUGHOUT THE PROVINCE, WITH VIOLENT CLASHES BETWEEN POLICE AND DEMONSTRATORS REPORTED IN SARGODHA AND WAZIRABAD. STUDENTS AND LAWYERS LED PROCESSIONS IN VARIOUS PLACES AND A NUMBER OF ARRESTS REPORTEDLY WERE MADE.

4. THERE WERE NO KNOWN CLASHES BETWEEN PPP AND PNA WORKERS. PPP HAS APPARENTLY REALIZED FUTILITY OF OPPOSING OPPOSITION IN THE STREET WHEN SUPPORT FOR PARTY IS FAST ERODING. PNA SHOWED ITS DETERMINATION TO FIGHT TO THE FINISH IN LAHORE LAST FRIDAY (APRIL 15) WHEN UNARMED DEMONSTRATORS RAN THROUGH A HAIL OF STENGUN FIRE TO ATTACK AND BURN A CINEMA HOUSE AND A NEARBY PPP OFFICE (REF (B)). PPP FORCES
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HAVE BEEN IN RETREAT SINCE THEN, ALTHOUGH SCATTERED VIOLENT CLASHES CAN STILL BE EXPECTED. POLICE ARE NO LONGER ATTEMPTING TO DISRUPT PEACEFUL PNA PROCESSIONS IN LAHORE, EVIDENCE THAT THEY, TOO, WISH TO AVOID CONFRONTING OPPOSITION MOVEMENT WHICH MANY OF OUR CONTACTS BELIEVE HAS DEVELOPED MOMENTUM OF ITS OWN INDEPENDENT OF PNA LEADERSHIP. (IN APPARENT EFFORT TO BOLSTER POLICE MORALE AND KEEP THEM IN THE FIGHT, PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER QURESHI ANNOUNCE TWO MONTHS EXTRA SALARY FOR ALL POLICEMEN UP TO RANK OF DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT WHILE ADDRESSING ANNUAL POLICE PARADE IN LAHORE APRIL 16.)
GAMON

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